

Linda has helped transform the Columbine Manor into a rehabilitation center, sending home about 40 percent of its residents within a month or two. Perhaps the rehabilitation rate at Columbine Manor is so high because Lisa has treated her job as an opportunity to increase morale, to work alongside, and to generally get to know the residents there.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, Linda Engelhart has acted with compassion, and has served as a model for the young and old of our nation. Today, I would like to thank and honor her on behalf of Congress for all that she has done for her residents and for humanity.

INTRODUCTION OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 173—THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS EQUALITY RESOLUTION

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today with the support of 26 of our colleagues—including both Republicans and Democrats—I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 173, the "International Human Rights Equality Resolution," a Resolution decrying human rights violations based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. We introduced this legislation Mr. Speaker, because we believe very strongly that we must send a strong message that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people must be treated with dignity and respect, not with hatred and violence.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that we have introduced our Resolution today, which is the U.N. International Day in Support of Survivors of Torture. This Resolution, together with Amnesty International's newly released report, "Breaking the Silence," highlights the use of torture against people based on sexual orientation and condemns governments who perpetrate these outrageous human rights violations, or fail to do anything to prosecute the perpetrators. All around the world, unacceptable violations of human rights have taken place against individuals solely on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation. These ongoing persecutions against gay people include arbitrary arrests, rape, torture, imprisonment, extortion, and even execution.

The scope of these human rights violations is staggering, and for the victims, there are few avenues for relief. Mr. Speaker, some States create an atmosphere of impunity for rapists and murderers of gays and lesbians by failing to prosecute or investigate violence targeted at these individuals because of their sexual orientation. These abuses are not only sanctioned by some States, often, they are perpetrated by agents of the State.

Mr. Speaker, in Afghanistan, men convicted of sodomy by Taliban Shari'a courts are placed next to standing walls by Taliban officials and are subsequently executed as the walls are toppled upon them and they are buried under the rubble. In Guatemala and El Salvador, individuals are either tortured or

killed by para-military groups because of their real or perceived sexual identity. In Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Mauritania, and Iran persons are summarily executed if they are convicted of committing homosexual acts. In Pakistan, individuals are flogged for engaging in sexual conduct with same-sex partners, and in Uganda and Singapore individuals engaging in such conduct are sentenced to life in prison. In Brazil, a lesbian couple was tortured and sexually assaulted by civil police. Despite the existence of medical reports and eye-witness testimony, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are never prosecuted.

Mr. Speaker, around the world, individuals are targeted and their basic human rights are denied because of their sexual orientation. The number and frequency of such grievous crimes against individuals cannot be ignored. Violence against individuals for their sexual orientation violates the most basic human rights.

House Concurrent Resolution 173, puts the United States on record against such horrible human rights violations. As a civilized country, we must speak out against and condemn these crimes. Our Resolution details just a few examples of violence against gays and lesbians in countries as wide ranging as Saudi Arabia, Mexico, China, El Salvador, and other countries. By calling attention to this unprovoked and indefensible violence, the International Human Rights Equality Resolution will broaden awareness of human rights violations based on sexual orientation.

House Concurrent Resolution 173 reaffirms that human rights norms defined in international conventions include protection from violence and abuse on the basis of sexual identity, but it does not seek to establish a special category of human rights related to sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, it commends relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations (such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission) for documenting the ongoing abuse of human rights on the basis of sexual orientation. Our Resolution condemns all human rights violations based on sexual orientation and recognizes that such violations should be equally punished, without discrimination.

This legislation is endorsed by a broad coalition of international human rights groups, gay rights groups, and faith-based organizations, among others. They include: Amnesty International, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Watch, National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, Human Rights Campaign, Log-Cabin Republicans, Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and the National Organization of Women.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the United States Department of State and the United Nations for documenting the ongoing abuse of human rights on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Mr. Speaker, the protection of gender identity is not a special right or privilege, but it should be fully acknowledged in international human rights norms. I ask that my colleagues join with me in wholeheartedly embracing and supporting human rights for all people, no

matter what their sexual orientation might be. It is the only decent thing to do.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAURA INGALLS WILDER LIBRARY

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pride that I stand before the House today in observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Library. The Laura Ingalls Wilder Library is located in Mansfield, Missouri, a small town in Missouri's Eighth Congressional District.

Many will remember with great fondness the Laura Ingalls Wilder books. In fact many of us or our children grew up reading her accounts of life in the great outdoors. She wrote simply and vividly—with such detail that her accounts of pioneer life have become the way that many of us view life on the Midwestern frontier. Through her writing, Laura Ingalls Wilder provided us with a chronology of life during the Pioneer days that has allowed us to preserve a lost era in American history.

But Laura Ingalls Wilder did more than just evoke a love for the rural way of life in her writing. Through her writing, she instilled a love of reading and over time that love of reading was translated into action as she became a tireless advocate for our public libraries.

In rural America, public libraries are not just a luxury or a convenience, they are a way of life. Most small towns don't have a Barnes and Noble and many folks don't have access to Amazon.com.

As a result, the tireless endeavors of the Laura Ingalls Wilder's of today are keeping Ms. Wilder's efforts alive. In Wright County, the community is working in a cooperative and most inspiring manner to create the Laura Ingalls Wilder Library and Community Center, an expanded library that will provide a technology and community center. The center will give folks the opportunity to embark on a journey of learning and to inspire adults and children with a love for reading.

Mr. Speaker, on this very special occasion, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Library. May the blessings of the last 50 years serve as a vision for the next 50 years.

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM E. MARTIN, PRESIDENT OF UNITED WAY OF HUDSON COUNTY, UPON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 45 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor William E. Martin, who will be recognized by the United Way of Hudson County,